

OBTAINING LETTERS OF SUPPORT AND COMMITMENT

It is important to distinguish between "Letters of Support" and "Letters of Commitment."

Letters of Support: A letter of support proclaims that an interested party believes a project is worthwhile. Letters of support may be solicited from community organizations, businesses, other academic institutions, or anyone else who is part of the service population. These letters do not commit to any financial or in-kind support. They are merely to indicate to funding agencies that NWACC has established connections with businesses and people who are familiar with our mission, share our values, and are interested in the success of our proposal.

When soliciting a letter of support, explain to writers that you are asking for a letter because the College knows they have an interest in the proposed project or could potentially benefit from its activities.

Letters of Commitment: A letter of commitment shows that an organization believes a project is so worthwhile it is willing to commit personnel or resources to it. Letters of commitment from partners and collaborators demonstrate that the funding agency is not the only source of financial support for a project.

Some examples of commitment are:

- Cash donations
- Donation of supplies, equipment, or other goods
- Use of facilities or services (such as office space or computer service)
- Staff time devoted to a project

Letters of commitment should be obtained from project partners or collaborators only after data generation, discussion about the merits of the proposal, and development of a work plan and timeline. Because commitment implies financial support in one form or another, writers must be fully informed of project expectations and the extent of their commitment.

The Letters: Send the writers a project summary or an abstract of the project and encourage them to call you with questions or feedback. Also provide them with a draft letter, using the sample letters of Support or Commitment as your guide for creating one. Formal letters should be printed on company or agency letterhead.

Give the writer or contact a deadline by which to return the letter. Letters should be addressed to NWACC's President, but they should be mailed or delivered to the Office for Grants. An electronic copy should be sent to the Office for Grants also. Originals will be kept on file to submit with the proposal. Copies will be made for project team members as needed.

Always review the letters! If there are serious errors (misspelled names, inaccurate references to the project), don't hesitate to ask the contributor to correct them and provide a new letter. For this reason, begin the process of obtaining the letters as soon as possible. Some corporations require a legal review of the letter, so allow ample time for reviews and corrections.